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# Theorising Internal Colonialism in Australia

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*Abstract: The theory of internal colonialism has been applied to the structural relationships between first nations and the settler state, economy, and society (Stavenhagen 1965; Casanova 1965; Blauner 1969; Hechter 1975, 1999; Wolpe 1975; Hartwig 1978). In this paper it will be applied to the situation of Indigenous peoples in Australia (Jennett 2011) and compared and contrasted with Blagg's (2008) recent work on neo-colonialism in a globalised world in which he identifies the existence of two separate domains, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. He argues for the need for hybrid institutions which respect the Aboriginal domain and accommodate Aboriginal solutions to Aboriginal-identified problems, as well as provide access to knowledge and resources controlled by settler governments (state and national) in the non-Aboriginal domain. It will be argued that the theory of internal colonialism continues to explain the structures of power which disadvantage Indigenous Australians in a culturally allocated division of labour (Jennett 2011; Hechter 1975, 1999). However, Blagg's focus on the institutions of the frontier may provide a much needed conceptualisation of "a way forward" which empowers Indigenous people in Australia.*

Keywords: Internal Colonialism, Neo-Colonialism, Institutions of the Frontier, First Nations, Australia

## Introduction

**F**OR MUCH OF the period of white settlement in Australia since 1788, Indigenous peoples<sup>1</sup> were denied the rights of full citizenship. They had a status that essentially made them wards of the state and thus were legally subject to action by authorities that could not have been taken against other Australians (Hasluck 1970; Biskup 1973). During the 1960s and 1970s, however, the various discriminatory laws and controls over Indigenous peoples were removed and they gradually gained the same formal legal rights as other Australians.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this, now, some forty years later, Indigenous Australians are much more likely than other Australians to be disadvantaged, while many remain geographically, economically and socially separate from other Australians. They are more likely to be found amongst the unemployed and the lowly paid, and many Indigenous people who are employed work in Indigenous-specific functional and service agencies. Many live in multi-deficit communities,

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "Aboriginal", "Torres Strait Islander" peoples, "Indigenous" peoples and "First Nations" peoples are used throughout this chapter as historically or politically appropriate. They refer to the diverse peoples descended from those who, prior to British occupation, were occupying the land which came to be known as Australia. The Australian practice generally is to follow the State in referring to them as Indigenous or as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, they come from diverse language and cultural groups with names such as Gurindji, Wiradjuri and Kamiloroi. Despite some pan-Aboriginal political organisation at particular historic moments, their 'corporate' identity is, in many ways, a State sponsored one. For everyday purposes local identities are more meaningful.

<sup>2</sup> Some regulations remained for some time. For example, as late as late as 1972, school principals in NSW were required to take a child out of school if a non-Aboriginal parent complained about their presence.

and they are also over-represented both as perpetrators and victims of crime (Memmot et al. 2001; Weatherburn 2004). Blagg (2008) uses the concept of *the frontier* to analyse this relationship.

If we imagine a frontier in *relational*—rather than *territorial* and *institutional*—terms then we can see elements of frontiers existing wherever Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia confront one another. It takes shape in urban, rural and remote locations, along city streets, in parks, public houses, schools, offices, hospitals, prisons and youth detention centres, courts, at public events, in swimming pools, within shopping malls. Just because we on one side of the frontier insist it does not exist—the construct having outlived its usefulness—does not alter the fact that those on the other side of it confront its continued existence in their daily lives. (Blagg 2008: 41)

The structuralist theories of *internal colonialism*, especially as expounded by Hechter (1975, 1999), together with Greenberg's (1980) theory of *racial order*, are clearly relevant in explaining the position of Indigenous Australians in the earlier era. Importantly, these theories remain a powerful tool to explain the contemporary situation.

To understand the current position of Indigenous peoples, we need to trace their relationship with the Australian State over the last two hundred years, but especially over the last forty years (Jennett 2011a). The theories of Hechter and Greenberg provide a theoretical framework for this examination. Hechter's theory, with its focus on the role of the *cultural division of labour* as one of the major drivers in reproduction of disadvantage, is valuable in explaining the continuing social disadvantage among Australia's Indigenous peoples; the distinct ideological, cultural and structural bases of group formation among First Nations peoples in Australia; and the development of the structural relationship between the political, economic and cultural core of Australian society and Indigenous peoples of the periphery. Complementing Hechter's work, Greenberg's theory shows how social structure can be imposed from above, as a reflection of the practices of the dominant race; it can thus be used to study the development of a *paternalistic internal colonial racial order* in Australian society and its modification into a *plural internal colonial racial order* in the early 1970s,<sup>3</sup> developments which continue to impact on contemporary Indigenous society.

This paper is concerned with the ways relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples continue to be ordered in an *internal colonial* manner which is at the heart of Indigenous disadvantage in Australia. The concepts of *core/periphery* relations, *national integration* and *dependent development* are central to the argument that, since Australia ceased to be a colony of Great Britain in a political sense, an internal colonial racial order has existed in two historical forms. The first was a *paternalistic internal colonialism* (1901-1971) and later *plural internal colonialism* (1972-1996). The period of the Howard government and the subsequent Labor government has continued the second institutional variety but has heavily inflected it back in the direction of paternalism with the introduction of the Northern Territory

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<sup>3</sup> While Greenberg's (1980) theory of racial order is used here to discuss internal colonialism, First Nations peoples in Australia also differ from the dominant population ethnically and their struggle for their rights can be seen as a form of counter-hegemonic nationalism. However, here the focus is on the structures of internal colonialism rather than the counter-hegemonic struggle against it, so the term "racial order" is being used following Greenberg. The struggle for both equal citizenship rights and 'aboriginal status rights' (Werther 1992) was a key trigger to the change from a paternalistic to a plural form of internal colonialism in the early 1970s.

Intervention and the lack of a national Indigenous political advisory body since the demise of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

## Racial Order

Greenberg's (1980) work provides a model of analysis of the racial patterning of behaviour exemplified in an internal colonial social structure. He examines the impact of capitalist development on patterns of racial domination. His approach is 'top down', focusing primarily on businessmen, workers and farmers in the dominant racial group. He argues that these are the class actors who play key roles in 'elaborating, accommodating, or undermining racial barriers in the market and society' and which forge the State racial apparatus (Greenberg 1980: x). In any sort of state characterised by a 'race relations' situation, interactions take place within a broad framework of power relations in which one race is dominant and the other(s) subordinate. Greenberg defines 'domination' as

... the relative standing of social groups apparent in a range of possible contexts, including the economy and polity. In the case of racial domination, one social group distinguished by physical criteria may monopolise landholdings and may have a preferred access to the state when compared to another social group also distinguished by physical criteria. The group in the preferred position will be considered as the 'dominant section' and the group in the less-favoured position will be considered the 'subordinate section'. (Greenberg 1980: 5)

Greenberg (1980) argues that capitalist development creates inequalities and uneven development between regions and population groups. Both on a global and a national scale there is a dichotomy between *core* and *peripheral* regions, with the core exploiting the labour and resources of the periphery. The uneven development which emerges is functional to capital accumulation.

Two key concepts in any discussion of a racial order are 'the nation' and 'the State'. The State is the repository of political authority within a territory and is central to the development of a racial order, as it responds to dominant capitalist interests (Greenberg 1980). Pettman (1991: 30) argues that states are made, not given, and their existence is continually being asserted by 'state-making' practices. Nations refer to cultural groupings which, in their nationalistic phase (Holmes 1986), aspire to their own political community. Obviously, not all nations coincide with state boundaries and this can lead to tension within the State over which cultural grouping should have its identity-script written into the institutions of political power. Pettman (1991: 33) argues that, like states, nations also are made, not given, and he refers to the process of 'nation-making'. This means actively promoting a *sense of peoplehood* based on 'common heritage' and 'territory'. This common heritage is 'a composite quality, made up of shared experiences ... such as language, culture and a sense of shared history' (Pettman 1991: 34). Since the idea of a *territory* is crucial to both state-making and nation-making there is a commonly held feeling that 'nation-making and state-making are intimately related' (Pettman 1991: 35), which is one reason why Indigenous peoples frequently try to obtain recognition of their sovereignty over their traditional lands (Jennett 1987; Werther 1992; Havemann 1999).

Lerner (1991) looks at the work the concept of the nation does for those who invoke it. *Hegemonic nationalism* is used to bind the citizen and civil society more closely to the state.

However, *counter-hegemonic nationalism* is used by a subordinate group to reforge its identity in such a way that it is not based on subordination. The development of the Black Power movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s was an attempt by some Aboriginal people to reforge their identity and to renegotiate their status in Australian society (Jennett 1980b, 1996; Foley 1994). However, this movement was quickly transformed into a more deeply grounded identity based on ‘aboriginal status’ (Werther 1992).

## Settler/Indigenous Racial Order in Australia

If we examine the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the State at the hegemonic level, the Australian nation-building exercise has gone through two main stages since the inception of the Australian state in 1901. The first stage occurred between 1901 and 1969 and was characterised by the expectation that immigrants and (after the late 1930s in theory, but 1951 in practice<sup>4</sup>) Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders would become assimilated into an Anglo-European mainstream society. This hegemonic nationalism involved a contradictory process through which, on the one hand, immigrants and Indigenous peoples were pressured to assimilate, use only the English language and customs; but, on the other, those most physically and culturally distinctive were subjected to exclusionary practices (Parkin 1979) based on racial and ethnic perceptions (Rowley 1972a, b; Reay 1965). Beckett’s (1988: 17) assertion that Aborigines were inside the State but not the nation, applies most clearly to this period. This was the period which is here being termed a *paternalistic internal colonial racial order* as far as Indigenous peoples were concerned. Pastoral and mining capital and the dominant Churches were the interests that governments consulted on future development for Aboriginal peoples. Trade unions and workers’ organisations were marginalised in this process (Hardy 1972). In the paternalistic period, very few opportunities existed for Indigenous people to participate in mainstream economic and social life (Jennett 2011b).

The second period—a *plural internal colonial racial order*—began in the mid-to-late sixties with the concept of *integration* (Docker 1964) but was only formally articulated by the Whitlam government which took office in 1972<sup>5</sup> (Jennett 1979: 366; Docker 1964: 248-251). It used the concept of a ‘multi-cultural’ society<sup>6</sup> which welcomed immigrants in their diversity (Price 1979) and ‘self-determination’ for Indigenous peoples (Lippmann 1979).<sup>7</sup> This led to developing divisions within the mainstream society about the appropriate conventions of civil society. The key change for Indigenous peoples was that the State chose to recognize them as a legitimate sectional interest for which specifically tailored agencies for service delivery and certain other functions were necessary and they were to be consulted about their own development needs, although the promised ‘self-determination’ was quite circumscribed (Coombs 1978; Lippman 1979; Fletcher 1994).

<sup>4</sup> The policy of assimilation was technically introduced in 1937 but due to the intervention of WW11 it was not officially adopted nationally until 1951 (Jennett 1979; Bennett 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister in the ALP (Australian Labor Party) national government from December 1972 until December 1975. Subsequently, Malcolm Fraser was Prime Minister in the Liberal-National Party government from December 1976 until March 1983, when the ALP regained power under Bob Hawke.

<sup>6</sup> Later formalised as the policy of “multiculturalism” by the Fraser Government.

<sup>7</sup> Self-determination was defined at a seminar of (white) administrators in Aboriginal Affairs in 1973 as “Aboriginal communities deciding the pace and nature of their future development within the legal, social and economic restraints of Australian society” (Lippmann 1979: 176).

Importantly, despite the ‘subordinate’ role of Indigenous peoples in the Australian racial order (Greenberg 1980), there was also a ‘struggle from below’ (Miliband 1989) with the development from the 1950s of a counter-hegemonic struggle by Indigenous activists and their non-Indigenous supporters (Bandler 1989; Jennett 1988; Lippman 1981) through which claims were made upon the Australian State for both citizenship rights and ‘aboriginal status’ rights (Werther 1992). As Werther (1992: xxi) explains, ‘a claim to aboriginal status is a political claim that references theory in international law and custom applied to nations’.

The Whitlam government’s pluralist approach to diversity was in part a response to this counter-hegemonic struggle by Indigenous peoples, but it also arose from an increasing awareness by politicians of the growing non Anglo-European immigrant vote (Sestito 1982) and the fact that the Australian Labor Party had always contained a concentration of the descendants of the Irish, whose feelings about British cultural hegemony were at best ‘mixed’. Moreover, the Whitlam Government came to power on a tide of desire for change on lifestyle issues (Penniman 1983) and in a context of the development of an international human rights framework. These factors provided Australia’s Indigenous peoples with an *historic moment* in which they were able to seize the initiative in an attempt to *redefine the racial order* of Australia.

### **Internal Colonialism Modified**

Throughout the 1960s many former colonies of metropolitan powers (such as Britain and France) achieved independence, frequently due to the efforts of anti-colonial liberation movements. They became the peripheral countries of the international system of power while the metropolitan countries remained at the core. Indigenous peoples who formed small domestic minorities in independent settler states, such as Australia, remained in an internal colonial relationship with the ruling power group, the ‘Whites’ (Moreton-Robinson 2007); they lived at the periphery with white rulers being at the core (Rowley 1972a, b).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s there was much discussion about the concept of internal colonialism, which refers to the sort of colonial relationship that continues to exist between the settlers and the Indigenous or ‘aboriginal’ (Werther 1992) peoples when a settler state achieves independence from the metropolitan colonial power.

One model of internal colonialism is that espoused by Blauner (1969: 393). He discussed the concept in relation to Black Americans who, while they are not Indigenous peoples, have been used and abused in the interests of whites over many generations (Lacey 1972). He analysed the ghetto revolts which took place in the 1960s in the USA, seeing them as ‘collective responses to colonized status’. He noted the use of the discourse of colonialism by ghetto protestors as they tried to articulate their experience of being controlled by outsiders and their identification with anti-colonial liberation movements which were operating at that time (Blauner 1969: 394).

Other influential models of internal colonialism were put forward by Latin American writers. Casanova (1965: 32) argued that the new nations which emerged after gaining independence from a colonial power preserved ‘the dichotomous character and contradictory types of relations similar to those found in the colonial society’. Stavenhagen (1965: 64) maintained that the city becomes the core of the new nation and the rural areas the periphery.

One of the more developed theoretical treatments of internal colonialism is that of Hechter (1975; 1999), with his focus on national development and alternative approaches to the integration of indigenous peoples. For Hechter:

*National development* is a process which may be said to occur when the *separate cultural identities* of regions begin to lose social significance, and become blurred. In the process, the several local and regional cultures are gradually replaced by the establishment of *one national culture* which cuts across the previous distinctions. The core and peripheral cultures must ultimately merge into one all-encompassing cultural system to which all members of the society have primary identification and loyalty. (Hechter 1975: 5; emphasis added).

Hechter (1975) identifies two alternative models of national development, the *Diffusion Model* and the *Internal Colonial Model*, which involve different paths that will be followed by a state to integrate its Indigenous peoples. The *Diffusion Model of National Development* predicts that, following industrialisation, the peoples of the periphery will eventually become acculturated to the culture of the core, that is, the culture of the ethnic/racial group which dominates the State. Interactions between the core and the periphery will, in the long run, bring about a common set of economic, cultural and political institutions and practices, and the foundations for a separate ethnic identity will disappear (Hechter 1975: 6-8).

By contrast to the diffusion model, in the *Internal Colonial model of national development* 'the core is seen to dominate the periphery politically and to exploit it materially' (Hechter 1975: 9). Noting the literature which argues that the periphery remains culturally isolated from the core in developing countries, Hechter (1975: 26) says '[i]t is difficult to argue that peripheral groups in industrial societies are economically, politically and culturally isolated from the core'. Because the peripheral group is 'suffused with exploitative connections to the core ... it can be deemed an internal colony' (Hechter 1975: 32). According to Hechter:

There is a relative lack of services, lower standard of living and high level of frustration ... among members of the peripheral group. There is national discrimination on the basis of language, religion or other cultural forms. Thus the aggregate economic differences between the core and the periphery are causally linked to their cultural differences. (Hechter 1975: 34)

In his view, the fact that the racial/ethnic conflict persists in such a state is related to a *culturally allocated division of labour within a state* in which economic disadvantage prevails in the periphery. Hechter (1999: 354) argues that the persistence of ethnic identity as a basis for group formation relies on 'the cultural division of labor'.<sup>8</sup> Thus:

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<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, Hechter (1999) outlined the persistence of ethnic identity among those not in a disadvantaged structural position. This can be facilitated by occupational specialisation of certain ethnic groups, such as that exemplified in his US data by the concentration of Yiddish-speaking Jews in management, sales, medicine and accountancy, and Eastern Europeans as skilled industrial workers. It is also possible to point to ethnic groups that are to be found providing services both to their own community (eg. accountancy and legal services) and specialised ethnic-related services to the broader community (eg. restaurants). Whether these concentrations which facilitate interactional networks among certain ethnic groups form a third mode of national integration or a sub-set of the diffusion model remains to be explored elsewhere.



A cultural division of labor occurs whenever culturally marked groups are distributed in an occupational structure. However, since the distribution of such groups can take many different forms, cultural divisions of labor vary with respect to their degrees of hierarchy and segmentation. (Hechter 1999: 356)

He posits that there is ‘a positive relationship between intensity of interaction among a set of individuals and the degree to which group solidarity develops’ (Hechter 1999: 357). The basis of networks of interaction is ‘an unstratified set of individuals’ (Hechter 1999: 357). The homogeneity of even an unstratified set of people will be influenced by geographical factors (such as mountain ranges), distance, and cultural diversity, in that ‘some individuals [will be] more peripheral to networks of interaction than others who are more centrally located’ (Hechter 1999: 357).

The economic dependence which promotes ‘backwardness’ in peripheral groups is then reinforced through juridical, political, and military measures. In Australia, this leads to the situation, where Indigenous ‘unruly subjects’ (Lee 2007) are concentrated in the periphery, which is characterised by high rates of offending, victimisation and incarceration (Weatherburn 2004; Memmot et al. 2001). Blagg (2008: pp. 18-57) refers to ‘waste populations’ for which capitalism has no use being managed by the criminal justice system. While the majority of Indigenous peoples in Australia no longer reside in remote peripheral locations geographically the theory of internal colonialism still applies to their economic and political disadvantage and cultural marginality.

For Hechter, the penetration of the cultural institutions of the core ‘narrowed socialisation differences’ between the core and peripheral collectivities. In the face of these pressures for acculturation, the persistence of a distinctive culture in peripheral areas could not be explained by the periphery’s isolation from the core culture. ‘Instead, the persistence of peripheral culture’ suggested for Hechter (1975: 27) a vigorous ‘pattern of resistance to assimilation’. Hence, in Australia there was the counter-hegemonic struggle for Indigenous rights and status noted earlier. Noting the existence of separatist political movements in such societies as Canada, Belgium and the United Kingdom (all liberal democracies) Hechter (1975: 5) argues that this *ethnic persistence* suggests that ‘successful incorporation of peripheral groups occurs only under certain conditions’.

On the issue of suffusion of the peripheral group with exploitative connections with the core, Blauner (1969: 404) noted that, in the sixties in the USA, outside of some areas of the South, there was no Black economy and that most Black Americans were ‘inevitably caught up in the larger society’s structure of occupations, education, and mass communication’. He observed that, as a result of contradictory pressures, Black Americans had both an ‘*ethnic nationalist orientation* which reflected the reality of colonization’ and an ‘*integrationist orientation* which corresponded to the reality that the institutions of the larger society were much more developed than those of the incipient nation’ (Blauner 1969: 404; emphasis added).

It has been argued that an internal colonial relationship between settlers and Indigenous or First Nations peoples, continues to exist in Australia (Jennett 2011a). A very high proportion of Indigenous people continue to remain concentrated in the structural periphery of relationships of power in Australian society.

Compared to the general population, Indigenous people have lower educational attainments, higher rates of unemployment, lower incomes, poorer health, higher rates of crime, arrest, incarceration, and intra community violence. (Jennett 2011a: 122)

They are also 'concentrated in relatively disadvantaged [census] Collection Districts (CDs) based on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) advantage/disadvantage rank' (Biddle 2009: v).

## Overcoming Internal Colonialism

What is the way out of this structurally disadvantaged position? Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have struggled to overcome it for years by lobbying for land rights, self-determination, specialised functional and service agencies and other such measures.

Blagg's (2008) recent work on neo-colonialism in a globalised world in which he identifies the existence of two separate domains, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, may be a way forward. He asks us to

[I]magine the implications, for theory and practice, of there being two separate social formations coexisting behind the carefully embroidered façade of one state, one language, one system of law. Nurturing these two social formations are two conflicting founding mythologies; one—the dominant one—is concerned with Australia as a new 'society, the other is concerned with perhaps the oldest continuing culture anywhere in the world.' (Blagg 2008: 33)

Blagg quotes Von Sturmer's definition of the Aboriginal domain as occurring where

the dominant social life and culture are Aboriginal, where the major language or languages are Aboriginal, where the system of knowledge is Aboriginal; in short where the resident Aboriginal population constitutes the public. (Von Sturmer 1984 as quoted in Blagg 2008: 43)

Blagg goes on to argue that such domains include small urban spaces and may fluctuate temporarily, for example, as non-Aboriginal spaces in the day time and Aboriginal at night.

Hechter's hypothesis is that the ethnic identity of structurally disadvantaged peoples continues principally because of their common resistance to the unfairness of their disadvantaged position. Blagg, on the other hand, argues that Aboriginal people use the resources of the institutions of the core to ensure their survival as Aboriginal peoples. While in some aspects of their lives they will be integrated into the broader Australian economy, polity and culture, in others they will draw their crucial identity from activities and understandings from the Aboriginal domain. Therefore, institutions of the core (he gives the example of prisons) may mean quite different things to those operating from a dominant Australian perspective and those conducting their lives on the basis of an Aboriginal perspective. He sees the institutions of the frontier, the space between the two domains, as providing the best hope for self-determination and empowerment, and therefore as a way out of their structurally disadvantaged position.

However, we should note that the burst of Indigenous initiatives which set up institutions such as the Aboriginal legal services and medical services in the 1970s was similarly infused

with hope of an Aboriginal-controlled, self-determining future. While these institutions continue, in many ways, to operate in the Aboriginal domain, the legal services are severely constrained by the control of the purse strings by the core which allocates funds in a discriminatory way in comparison to those available for the Legal Aid Commissions which provide for mainstream clients (Schwartz & Cunneen 2009). Just as Foley observed in 1994 they are also still heavily reliant on non-Aboriginal professionals. While the frontier institutions discussed by Blagg (e.g. circle sentencing, community justice groups) may represent a further step towards community control, the need for their existence is driven by the dominant Australian legal system because of the disproportionate extent to which Aboriginal people are caught up in its nets.

## Conclusion

In this paper it has been argued that the theory of internal colonialism as expounded by Hechter combined with the theory of racial order as developed by Greenberg is still relevant to the current situation of Indigenous peoples in Australia. However, Hechter's argument that the persistence of ethnic identity among peoples who are disadvantageously connected to an exploitative social core is reliant upon that disadvantage has been challenged using Blagg's discussion of the relationship between the Aboriginal domain and the non-Aboriginal domain which focuses on the extent to which Aboriginal peoples use their participation in the institutions of the core to extract resources and skills which enable them to continue and develop their Aboriginality, the opposite of national integration by diffusion.

Blagg argues for the need for hybrid institutions which respect the Aboriginal domain and accommodate Aboriginal solutions to Aboriginal-identified problems, as well as provide access to knowledge and resources controlled by settler governments (state and national) in the non-Aboriginal domain.

While the theory of internal colonialism continues to explain the structural relations of power which disadvantage Indigenous Australians in a culturally allocated division of labour, does Blagg's focus on the institutions of the frontier provide a much needed conceptualisation of 'a way forward' which will empower them? He says that

... future improvements in relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people may rest on generating forms of hybrid structure in the liminal space between domains that, while opening up room for dialogue, do not attempt to dismantle or coopt Indigenous domain. (Blagg 2008: 49-50)

Noting the existence of 'Aboriginal experience and ways of seeing the world which remain incommensurable with white society' (Blagg 2008: 50) Blagg also observes that there are 'numerous crossing points and in-between places ... between these incommensurate worlds.' In the criminal justice area he notes the existence of 'new structures, objects and practices' which allow previously 'denied knowledge' to be articulated in the dominant [settler] discourse' (Blagg 2008: 52). He nominates Aboriginal courts, healing centres, Circle Sentencing and other measures as included among these new structures, objects and practices.

While these measures do appear to somewhat lessen the iron grip of the settler state on Indigenous people's lives, providing employment opportunities for Indigenous professionals and field workers, and an opportunity for Indigenous thinking to be aired, they still rest

precariously on funding from that settler state. Also, they are measures to deal with the very high rates at which Indigenous people are 'administered' by the settlers' criminal justice system. On the one hand, in many ways they are the next step in Indigenous peoples' demands that the settler state accommodate their difference, their First Nations' status, but on the other, they are made necessary by the multi-dimensional disadvantage which so many of them experience due to internal colonial structures of power and the culturally allocated division of labour by which these are characterised. The struggle against disadvantage while preserving difference continues.

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